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The Advice of Shaykh Rabee` to Shaykh Faalih Concerning Jarh of the Narrators and Innovators - Part 1

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Trans. Maktabah Salafiyyah

Bismillaahir-Rahmaanir-Raheem

All praise is due to Allaah, and may the salaat and salaam be upon the Messenger of Allaah, upon his family, his companions and whoever followed his guidance.

To the respected Shaykh, Faalih bin Naafi al-Harbee, may Allaah grant him success and straighten his step.

As-Salaamu Alaykum wa Rahmatullaah wa Barakaatuh, to proceed:

Verily I have come across some speech of yours relating to Al-Jarh (disparagement) which caught my attention when:

Firstly:

Some questions were posed to you on Friday 27/2/1423H about some people and you responded by stating that they are not from amongst the Salafis.

You were (further) asked is it a condition to clarify the reasons for al-Jarh (disparagement). You answered by saying "No, this is not a condition. This is in relation to the reasons for al-Jarh. Clarifying the reasons of Jarh (disparagement) and Ta'deel (praise) occurs in the knowledge of narrations. And it is not (a condition when speaking) about the speech of the opposers in their methodologies and in their paths."

I say (Shaykh Rabee):

1) You were asked about specific individuals who are widely known amongst people as [being upon] Salafiyyah and calling to it and in the eyes of the people there were scholars from amongst them. You expelled them from the fold of Salafiyyah and this expulsion is a severe Jarh (disparagement) which requires proof. If you do not produce any proof and clarify the reasons for this Jarh (disparagement) the people will believe that you have oppressed and transgressed against them and spoken ill about their religion without any just cause. So you

would be accused by the people and you would be in need of exonerating your religion and your honour.

If you do not do so, the people will attack you and neither you nor anyone else would be pleased with this attack. Then as a result fitnah would arise, differing would occur between the Salafis and there will be an increase in mutual revilements. Nothing could stop this except that you mention adequate reasons for this expulsion. And even you would request these reasons if anyone disparaged you or expelled you from Salafiyyah.

2) If the Jarh Mubham (unexplained disparagement) is opposed by a Ta'deel (praise), then that which is most correct is that it is now a necessity that this Jarh Mubham be explained. And someone being well known for their religion, (sticking to the) Sunnah, and (being upon) Salafiyyah and calling to it is stronger than a ta'deel (praise) given by (just) one or two scholars.

Speaking about the methodologies and ways of the Mukhalifoon (those who oppose the truth) is deemed from the most important of what enters into the topic of al-Jarh (disparagement) because there is a binding connection between individuals and their methodologies. The one who criticises a person's methodology is (also) criticising him.

That is why you see the Salaf clarifying with proofs the deviation of the people of innovation and the corruption in their methodologies. They have many works which cannot be counted and mention of some of them will come later.

I believe that it is necessary to mention some of statements of the people of knowledge (which highlight) that it is a condition to explain the Jarh Mubham and that some types of Jarh are rejected, I say:

Ibn Salaah preferred (the view) that the Ta'deel is accepted without mention of the reason. And that the Jarh is not accepted unless it is explained, its reason clarified. This is because the people vary in that which warrants a Jarh and that which does not. He narrated upon Al-Khateeb that this was the way of the Imams of Hadeeth and its Scholars (of critique), the likes of Al-Bukhari, Muslim and other than them. This is why Al-Bukhari relied upon the narrations of a group (of people) who were criticised by others, such as 'Ikrimah the mawlaa of Ibn Abbaas (may Allaah be pleased with them both) and he mentioned others. Then he said that Muslim relied upon the narrations of Suwayd ibn Sa'eed and a group of others about whom it is well known that they were criticised. This was also practiced by Abu Dawood As-Sijistaani. All this confirms that they held the position that the Jarh is not established unless the reason is explained and that the methodologies used by those who criticise the men are (sometimes) unclear and different.

It is reported upon Shu'bah (may Allaah have mercy upon him), that he was asked why did you abandon the Hadeeth of so and so? He said: "I saw him riding a work horse so I left his Hadeeth." Even though Shu'bah was an Imaam in Hadeeth and criticising narrators, his criticism here is incorrect because the like of this action is not considered from the reasons that warrant a Jarh which removes someone's adaalah (integrity).

He also mentioned the story of Muslim ibn Ibraheem, that he criticised Saalih Al-Murri with that which is not considered from the reasons that warrant a Jarh, even though Saalih Al-Murri was declared Da'eef (weak) for other than this reason. Also 'Ikrimah who was criticised for being upon the belief of the sect of the Safariyyah (amongst) the Khwaarij. Some of the scholars criticised him for this but Al-Bukhari never accepted this due to the weakness of their proof.

Allaamah 'Abdur Rahman Al-Mu'allimi said in the introduction to "Al-Jarh wat Ta'deel" (p. Jeem), "Some of the major and greatest scholars of Hadeeth used to speak about the narrators and they would not be relied upon or any attention given to them."

The Imaam 'Ali Al-Madini said, and he is from the Imams of this subject, "Abu Nu'aym and Affaan are truthful but I don't accept their speech concerning men because they do not leave anyone without disparaging them."

And Abu Nu'aym and Affaan are from the honourable and that aforemented speech (of Ali Al-Madini) indicates that they have a lot of speech about narrators, and alongside that you almost cannot find quotation of their statements in the books of this science."

There is no difference in this tajreeh (disparagement) between a criticism relating to 'adaalah (trustworthiness) due to fisq or innovation and other things and between the Jarh related to memorisation and precision, like their saying "weak memory" or "he has many mistakes" or "he has many mishaps" and the likes of that.

Ibn Al-Junayd Al-Hanbali said: I heard Yahya ibn Ma'een say, "If Abu Nu'aym used to mention a person and say, "So and so is sound" and praise him, then he (that person spoken of) is a Shee'iyy and if he said "So and so is Murji", know that he is a person of the Sunnah." (Al-Meezaan 3/350).

This Abu Nu'aym, alongside his excellence, noble status and the praise of him by Imam Ahmed and others, then neither jarh or ta'deel was accepted from him, and you can see that his jarh here (in what is quoted above) is relating to

'aqeedah but it was not accepted by Yahya ibn Ma'een or Ibn Al-Madini or other than them.

Likewise 'Affaan ibn Muslim (may Allaah have mercy upon him) alongside his excellence, religion and knowledge, the Scholars of criticism would not accept from him Jarh or Ta'deel, and the words of Mu'allimi indicate that there are others similar to them.

Your statement that it is not a condition to clarify the reasons for the Jarh when it relates to tabdee' (declaring a person to be an innovator) is very strange. And you intend by this even when the Ta'deel opposes the Jarh or (opposes) what is known from a person's past that he is Salafee, or what the people believe regarding him.

That which is even stranger is your claim that clarifying the reasons for the Jarh is specific to the knowledge of riwaayah (narrating) and according to my knowledge none of the Imams of Jarh wat Ta'deel have stated this opinion.

If you have come across some of the sayings of these Imams where they make a clear distinction or some of them make a distinction that they deem correct backed by evidences, then I will benefit (from that) and thank you (for it).

Yet, I fear that great harms will result from this statement of yours. For if a man comes and declares a scholar well known for his Salafiyyah to be an innovator like al-Albani or Ibn Baz or As-Sa'di or Al-Mu'allimi or any Salafi that is well known for their Salafiyyah from those who are alive like Shaykh Fawzaan or Shaykh Zayd Al-Madkhali or Shaykh Ahmed bin Yahyaa An-Najmi or Shaykh Muhammed Ibn Abdil Wahaab Al-Banna or Shaykh Faalih, and then it is said to this man explain the reasons why you have declared those or some of them to be innovators and he turns around and replies it is not a condition here in the matter of tabdee' to clarify the reasons for this Jarh and persisted with this Jarh, would any of the people accept this? Do you perceive that any of the Salafis will be safe from this tabdee' which results from this statement of yours?

I hope that you will contemplate and think deeply about these issues, then quickly take that position which is obligatory (upon you) towards this dangerous principle because it has spread amongst the youth and they are passing judgments upon one another.

The questioner said: "Because they are saying that a Shaykh might make a Jarh due to something that others might hold does not warrant a Jarh?"

You said may Allaah pardon you: "No, No this principle of theirs, I seek refuge with Allaah, this is an oppressive principle, this principle which has misguided the ummah, this is their principle, this is a principle that they have innovated."

I say: May Allaah pardon you, this is a principle of the Imaams of the Sunnah and Hadeeth, it is not oppressive rather it is from the essence of justice that Islam came with. Because a scholar could err in a Jarh or in a Ta'deel and his brother may come along and correct this mistake whether it be in this (the jarh) or that (the ta'deel).

As a scholar might make a Jarh due to that which does not warrant a Jarh and the critiquing Scholars (of al-Jarh wat-Ta'deel) would therefore reject this Jarh out of fairness to the one whom has been disparaged and examples of this have passed.

Yes, when the criticiser is from the trustworthy scholars who knows the reasons (asbaab) for al-jarh and at-ta'deel, and the one who objects is ignorant or a person of desire, then no consideration is given to his objection.

3) The questioner said: "So an unexplained Jarh is sufficient."

You responded: "If it is from a scholar then this is not Jarh, we do not say Jarh, it is not the Jarh (pertaining to) Riwayah (narrations). He might be a scholar who speaks against the people of innovation, speaks about Manhaj, speaks about 'Aqeedah and speaks about the religion, he might be an Imaam in this.And at the same time his narrations might not be accepted because he does not fulfil the requirements (necessary for the acceptance) of Riwaayah (narrations). There is a difference between the knowledge which is a tool and an art amongst the arts that is a means to safeguard the religion and between speaking about the various sects of people of desires and beliefs."

I say: May Allaah forgive you, how can you say that "this is not Jarh" and "we do not say Jarh" in this. Which Jarh is greater than tabdee'? Please return back to the books of Al-Jarh wat-Ta'deel and to those books that are purely related to Jarh, then you would find that they overloaded with disparagement of the people of innovation due to their bid'ah. Some examples are Ad-Du'afaa by Al-Bukhari, Kitaab Al-Majrooheen by Ibn Hibbaan, Kitaab Al-Kaamil Ibn 'Adi, Kitaab Ash-Shajarah Al-Jawzajaani, Ad-Du'afaa Ibn Al-Jawzi, Tahdheeb Al-Kamaal and that which branches from that like Tahdheeb At-Tahdheeb and Taqreeb Ibn Hajr, the books of Adh-Dhahabi Al-Mezaan, Ad-Deewaan and Al-Mughni.

Actually the Knowledge of Jarh which pertains to the people of innovation and other than them is a specific knowledge, as mentioned by Al-Haakim Abu Abdillaah.

Look at the words of Shaykh ul Islaam Ibn Taymiyyah (may Allaah have mercy upon him) where he said: "That which is intended, is that the scholars all agree that the lying of the Rafidah is worse than the rest of the sects from the people of the Qiblah.Whoever studies the books of Al-jarh wat-Ta'deel that have been authored on the (subject of) the names of the narrators, transmitters and their states – such as the likes of the books of Yahya ibn Sa'eed Al-Qattaan, 'Ali Al-Madini, Yahya ibn Ma'een, Al-Bukhari, Abu Zur'ah, Abu Haatim, Ar-Raazi, An-Nisaa'i, Abu Hatim ibn Hibbaan, Abu Ahmed ibn 'Adi, Ad-Daraqutni, Ibraheem ibn Ya'qoob Al-Jawzajaani As-Sa'di, Ya'qoob ibn Sufyaan Al-Faswa, Ahmed ibn Abdillaah ibn Salih Al-'Ajali, Al-'Uqayli, Muhammed ibn Abdillaah ibn 'Ammaar Al-Moosili, Al-Haakim An-Naysaboori and Al-Haafidh Abdul Al-Ghaniy ibn Sa'eed Al-Misri, the likes of these individuals are the great scholars, skilled critics (of the narrators) and those who understand the various conditions of the chains of narrations – he will see that it was well known with them that the lying of the Rafidah was greater than all of the sects."

Also Abu Ishaaq Al-Jawzajaani Al-Misri started his book about Al-Jarh wat ta'deel by mentioning the people of innovation; he started with the Khwaarij at the beginning as they were the first sect to appear in Islam, then he mentioned ten from their heads. Then secondly he mentioned As-Sabaaiyyah, then Al-Mukhtaariyyah, Rafidah and Shee'ah.

From the expressions that he used when speaking about them, so and so was Mukhtaari, so and so was Gaali Mufrit (fanatic extremist), so and so was the flag bearer for Al-Mukhtaar, so and so was a deviant, so and so was a liar and so and so was abusive.

Likewise Ibn Hibbaan started his book Al-Majrooheen by clarifying the types of people that were criticised and at the head of them he mentions the Zanaadiqah and the Rafidah.

So why would these Imams talk about the Rafidah and other than them from the people of innovation in their books, if Tabdee' is not considered to be from the (subject) of Al-Jarh?